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# Jobs Through Recycling: RBACs and REDAs

## What Is the Connection Between Jobs and Recycling?

**A**cross America, more individuals, organizations, businesses, and governments are collecting materials for recycling than ever before. The number of curbside recycling programs has grown 500 percent over the past five years. In fact, recycling is now managing almost one quarter of all waste generated in the United States.

But keeping valuable resources out of landfills is only part of the recycling story. Recycling also creates new businesses that haul, process, and broker recovered materials, as well as companies that manufacture and distribute recycled products. And these recycling businesses put people to work.

Recycling is estimated to create nearly five times as many jobs as landfilling. One study reported that 103,000 jobs, or 2.7 percent of all manufacturing jobs in the Northeast region of the United States, are attributable to recycling. The jobs created by recycling businesses draw from the full spectrum of the labor market (ranging from low- and semi-skilled jobs to highly skilled jobs). Materials sorters, dispatchers, truck drivers, brokers, sales representatives, process engineers, and chemists are just some of the jobs needed in the recycling industry. Recycling is actively contributing to America's economic vitality.

## What is EPA's *Jobs Through Recycling Initiative*?

EPA is helping to fuel this growth in the recycling industry through its *Jobs Through Recycling Initiative*. The Initiative puts the tools of business development—technology transfer, financing, and marketing—into the hands of recycling businesses. It facilitates cooperation and communication among solid waste officials, economic development organizations, and businesses involved in collecting, processing, remanufacturing, and selling products made from recovered materials.

## The *Jobs Through Recycling Initiative* has three goals:

- Expand markets for recycled materials.
- Stimulate economic development.
- Create jobs.

## How Will the Initiative's Goals Be Achieved?

Through grants to states and tribes, EPA is focusing its resources on the following four components of the Initiative:

- *Recycling and Reuse Business Assistance Centers (RBACs)*: Located in state solid waste or economic development agencies, these centers provide recycling businesses with the customized and targeted help they need to be successful.
- *Recycling Economic Development Advocates (REDAs)*: Hired by a state or tribal economic development office, these specialists seek to focus the traditional tools of their office—financial, marketing, and permitting assistance—on recycling business creation, and to coordinate solid waste and economic development efforts.
- *Recycling Technology Assistance Partnership (ReTAP) National Network*: Designed as a national information-sharing resource, ReTAP will ensure that technical knowledge gained in one corner of the United States spreads throughout the country to help businesses and manufacturers increase their use of recovered materials.
- *Interagency Cooperation*: Working closely with other agencies such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the Department of Commerce, EPA is focusing federal expertise and resources on recycling business development.

## How Are the RBACs and REDAs Fostering Recycling-Based Businesses?

The RBAC and REDAs are helping spawn new jobs and local and regional economic expansion. EPA's "seed money" is intended to create sustainable programs for continued recycling business development in future years. Demonstrating efficient systems for recycling economic development, these programs are already showing results.

### RBACs

The four RBACs in California, Minnesota, North Carolina, and New York provide a unique mix of technical, business, financial, and marketing assistance to local enterprises using recovered materials. Each state RBAC developed activities to serve the specific needs in its jurisdiction, as shown on the matrix on the inside of this brochure. For example, some RBACs help site materials processing facilities and conduct technical pilot projects, while others help companies obtain reliable supplies of recovered material feedstocks.

### REDAs

The 10 REDAs are professionals with backgrounds in both business development and recycling. They marshal and focus the resources of their offices to create opportunities all along the economic spectrum. Many REDAs are helping businesses market recovered materials, write business plans, and secure financing. More REDA activities are described on the matrix on the inside of this brochure.

## Who Benefits From the REDA and RBAC Programs?

The REDAs and RBACs serve all of the parties involved in recycling. Specifically, they are helping....

### Existing and Start-Up Recycling Businesses...

- Access technical information or engineering services to modify equipment to use recovered materials.
- Locate recovered material feedstocks.
- Write a business plan or prepare a loan application.

### Solid Waste Officials...

- Obtain technical, marketing, and financial information for strategic integrated solid waste planning.
- Access information to decide which materials to add to a curbside collection program.
- Measure program impact.

### Economic Development Officials...

- Assess long-term markets for recycled products.
- Identify funding sources.
- Expedite environmental permitting.

### Financiers...

- Assess capital and operating cost requirements.
- Project rates of return.
- Identify promising recycling investment opportunities.

## How Can I Access the REDAs and RBACs?

For more information on the RBAC and REDA programs, contact your EPA Regional Office or the individual REDAs or RBACs listed on the chart on the inside of this brochure. For information on ReTAP's National Network, contact the National Recycling Coalition (NRC) at 703 683-9025.

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